

Wilkins Reportedly Discussed Removing King

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Washington Post says Roy Wilkins is the black leader described in an FBI memo as having discussed with the agency the removal of Dr. Martin Luther King from leadership in the civil rights movement.

The Post, in today's editions, referred to a Dec. 1, 1964, FBI memo released earlier this week, which referred to an unnamed black leader who cooperated with the bureau's undercover campaign against King.

However, the Post said Wilkins, the retired NAACP executive secretary, told the Senate Intelligence Committee staff in 1975 that the FBI memo was "self-serving and full of inaccuracies."

Wilkins' wife called The Post story "absolute fabrication."

THE ATLANTA Constitution said in today's editions that a comparison of the FBI memo with Wilkins' testimony to the committee indicates that Wilkins may have been the leader who met with the FBI.

The Post quoted informed but unnamed sources as saying the former offi-

cial of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People met on Nov. 27, 1964, with then-FBI Assistant Director Cartha DeLoach about the bureau's attitude toward King.

In a memo written Nov. 27, DeLoach said the meeting ended with Wilkins promising to "tell King that he can't win in a battle with the FBI and that the best thing for him to do is to retire from public life."

The Dec. 1 memo was a followup written by FBI official J.A. Sizoo to suggest further action against King. Addressed to late FBI Assistant Director William C. Sullivan, it picked up some of DeLoach's remarks but deleted Wilkins' name.

The Sizoo memo was obtained under the Freedom of Information Act by the non-profit Center for National Security Studies.

DeLoach, in an interview with The Atlanta Journal, said he has "a vague recollection of some black leader coming to see me. I don't remember who he was. I have no idea what we talked

about."

WILKINS WAS NOT available for comment. His wife, who said she was speaking for him, called the allegation an "absolute fabrication. I heard him tell that to someone else," she said.

Mrs. Wilkins also commented on a previous comment by Senate investigators that the FBI's anti-King campaign included a proposal to groom a new national black leader to take his place.

She said she and Wilkins learned the identity of the leader from someone who worked with the Justice Department.

But she added, "I can't tell you, I wouldn't tell you because it would be very detrimental to the man."

She said she did not think the man knew anything about it and that the FBI selected him because he would be "amenable to them."

"I can't imagine any reputable black person who would have agreed to work with the FBI in (the late FBI Director J. Edgar) Hoover's day. I'm sure this person they had in mind had not worked with them."

The Washington Post
WASHINGTON — Roy Wilkins, the black leader described by the FBI as a cooperative contact in its undercover campaign to discredit the late Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., repudiated any such sympathies more than two years ago in an interview with Senate investigators.

The FBI's claims were publicized earlier this week as the result of a newly declassified Dec. 1, 1964, FBI memo that said an "ambitious" black leader, whose name was deleted, was apparently willing to work with the Bureau "to remove King from the national picture."

According to informed sources, the memo referred to Wilkins, then NAACP executive secretary, who had met several days earlier, on Nov. 27, 1964, with FBI assistant director Cartha DeLoach about the Bureau's attitude toward King.

In a memo written that same day, Nov. 27, DeLoach pictured Wilkins as apprehensive and said the meeting ended with Wilkins promising to "tell King that he can't win in a battle with the FBI and that the best thing for him to do is to retire from public life."

Wilkins, however, told the staff of the Senate Intelligence Committee in the fall of 1975 that DeLoach's account was "self-serving and full of inaccuracies." The NAACP official, now retired, denounced the remarks attributed to him as "pure invention" and indicated he had done little more than express his concern "that accusations about Dr. King would cripple the civil rights movement."

(DeLoach told the Atlanta Journal Tuesday that he has "a vague recollection of some black leader coming to see me. I don't remember who he was. I have no idea what we talked about.")

(In a telephone interview from New York, where he is an executive for PepsiCo Inc., DeLoach said, "You're asking about something that was 14 years and thousands of memorandums ago. He probably wanted to see Mr. Hoover and was referred to me.")

(He said he could not remember if the black man he met was publicly known at the time or one who later came to public prominence.)

See WILKINS, Page 26-A



EX-NAACP OFFICIAL ROY WILKINS - Said FBI Account Was 'Pure Invention'

Wilkins Continued From Page 1A

"If I knew any facts today, I would tell you. But it would be ancient history," added DeLoach, who said he felt public disclosures of a campaign by Hoover to have King replaced were "blown all out of proportion."

The Dec. 1, 1964, memo following up on Wilkins' visit with DeLoach, written by FBI official J.A. Sizoo to suggest further action against King, picked up some of DeLoach's previously unpublicized remarks about Wilkins. Senate investigators had been privy to them but never made them public. The Sizoo memo, with Wilkins' name deleted, was

finally obtained from the FBI under the Freedom of Information Act by the non-profit Center for National Security Studies.

Its release this week left the impression that the black leader mentioned in the Sizoo memo might be the same person as the now — and much younger — "national Negro leader" that the FBI had once secretly nominated to take over the civil rights movement once King had been "completely discredited." Informed sources, however, said Tuesday that Wilkins was not the mystery man. His name has never been made public.

5-31-78
 ATLANTA JOURNAL